

In the News

Children's Courthouse "Chambers" Multiply

Kids are starting to have fun at the courthouse.

A June 8 *Los Angeles Times* article titled "Trying to Make the Courthouse Kid-Friendlier" detailed the rising popularity throughout the state of supervised children's waiting rooms in courthouses. It reported that the Judicial Council encourages courthouse administrators to find ways of making kids more welcome so as to both keep courtroom distractions to a minimum and keep children safe. The story mentioned that, statewide, nearly 36 courthouses operate such waiting rooms and that all facilities built after 1999 are required to provide them.

The reporter (Monte Morin) visited Children's Chambers, the children's waiting room in the Lamoreaux Justice Center at the Superior Court of Orange County. The court contracts with Victim Assistance Programs to manage the room, whose walls are plastered with artwork. The children can choose among many puzzles, stuffed animals, board games, and books. They are offered crackers, juice, and

microwaved popcorn. Because of the risks involved in some custody battles, both parents and children are provided with identification bracelets, the room is not identified with a sign, and panic buttons were installed to alert sheriff's deputies to any trouble.

"Both the judges and the parents appreciate the service," says Susan Perdue, who directs the children's waiting rooms in the Superior Court of Orange County. "Parents can concentrate on presenting their case without having to worry about their children."

The Orange County court uses a variety of methods to inform visitors of its children's waiting rooms: Deputies at the courthouse security check-in area advise families of the service as they enter the courthouse; judges make announcements in the courtroom if children are present; and when courthouse employees encounter parents and their children in the hallways, they direct them to the waiting room.

To secure further publicity



The children's waiting room in the Lamoreaux Justice Center at the Superior Court of Orange County serves more than 250 kids per month. Photo: Christine Cotter; reprinted with permission from the June 8, 2001, edition of the *Los Angeles Times*

for its waiting rooms, the Orange County court announced the opening of a new children's waiting room in its main courthouse in a press release about its Law Day activities. That press release helped secure the *Los Angeles Times* article, which, in turn, spread the news about the court's waiting rooms to thousands more potential court users.

Other court-related programs in the news:

"State's Chief Justice Shares Perspective With Valley Youth," *Desert Sun* (Riverside County), May 5, 2001

Reported on Chief Justice Ronald

M. George's visit to Coachella Valley High School, where he gave students a lesson in the workings of the judicial branch as part of the "Government in Action" program sponsored by the Superior Court of Riverside County and the Desert Bar Association.

"Court Takes Road Trips to Campuses," *Sacramento Bee*, April 28, 2001

Described how the Third District of the Court of Appeal moved some of its proceedings from the courtroom to high school campuses to give students a chance to see the court's operations "up close and personal." ■

AOC Unveils New Grants Web Site

In June, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) launched a new Web site to improve its communication with the trial courts regarding grant opportunities.

Located on Serranus, the California courts' secure Web site (<http://serranus.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/grants>), the new site is designed to be a "one-stop" source of information about grant opportunities and programs administered by the

AOC. Through built-in links, visitors can find and download current requests for proposals (RFPs) and application forms for grant programs sponsored by divisions of the AOC. Each grant listing also provides guidelines for completing the application and a contact person at the AOC who can provide more information about the program.

"It will be immensely helpful to have easily accessible grant information in one place," says

Lisa Hicks, a grants specialist at the Superior Court of Siskiyou County. "A substantial portion of grant funding comes from large urban areas. Our 'frontier' county is geographically isolated, with needs and barriers to services unlike those of urban populations. An AOC grants Web site can provide a forum for posting information about grant opportunities and grant-related issues."

In addition to finding information on AOC-sponsored programs, site visitors can search through links to other Web sites that offer both public and private justice-related grants. One of those sites, located at www.cfd.gov/federalcommons, is the "Federal Commons" Web site, which serves as a portal to all federal agency grant programs. California has no similar resource, according to Lucy Smallsreed, Grants Program Administrator for the AOC.

"Currently, you have to go into each individual state agency's Web page to access its grant opportunities," says Ms. Smallsreed. "However, [California] is starting to explore the potential for a state grants portal by conducting focus

groups on the subject. Representatives from the AOC are involved in those focus groups." She anticipates that a state grants portal is at least a year away.

Initially, the AOC's grants Web site will offer information on and applications for its own grants programs only. Eventually it will expand to include information on grants from other public and private organizations. There are also plans to have the site provide AOC reporting and invoice forms that grantees must complete to show how their grant moneys are being spent.

● For more information on the AOC's grants Web site, contact Lucy Smallsreed, 415-865-7705; e-mail: lucy.smallsreed@jud.ca.gov. For information on how to gain access to the courts' secure Serranus Web site, call the AOC's Information Services Division at 415-865-7400. ■

In addition to providing information on AOC-sponsored programs, the AOC's new grants Web site contains links to sites that offer both public and private justice-related grants. Following is a selection of those sites.

www.cfd.gov/federalcommons

This comprehensive Web site provides a portal to all federal agency grant programs. The subject line "Law, Justice, and Legal Services" takes the user to links for all federal agencies that offer grants related to these topics.

www.ncjrs.org/fedgrant.html

This site is a gateway to justice-related grant opportunities from the federal Office of Justice Programs, including all

of its bureaus and offices.

www.statejustice.org

The site provides information and an online tutorial on how to apply for grants from the State Justice Institute, a federally funded grant-making body that offers programs specifically for state and local courts.

www.ocjp.ca.gov/index.htm

This site lists current RFPs for grants available from California's Office of Criminal Justice Planning.

www.foundationstatebarcal.org

Visitors to this site can learn about opportunities for funding from the Foundation of the State Bar of California.



Civil Filings Study

In light of the unification of California's trial courts, the Judicial Council and the California Law Revision Commission are conducting a study of the superior courts' three-track civil procedural system and its underlying policies.

Trial court unification has created one level of trial courts (superior); however, three distinct procedural tracks remain for civil filings. According to the amount in controversy, general civil cases are divided into unlimited civil cases, limited civil cases, and small claims cases. As part of the study, the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) is scheduled to start gathering empirical data from the courts and the people who use them, beginning in August. Researchers will then use the data to help determine the impacts of extending simpler procedures to more cases and to forecast whether such simplification can improve access to the courts and court efficiency.

The study will gauge the impacts of the following possible changes in the three-track procedural system:

- Extension of economic litigation procedures to a wider range of cases;

- An increase in the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) in small claims and limited civil cases; and

- An increase in the amount-in-controversy requirement for some or all small claims cases.

It is expected that raising the jurisdictional limits for small claims and limited civil cases and

increasing the use of ADR would (a) promote more accessible and cost-effective dispute resolution for litigants and (b) facilitate more efficient and effective operation of the courts. The study will also consider whether any further actions—which could come in the form of legislation, rules, forms, or educational projects—would be necessary to obtain the full benefit of such changes in the three-track procedural system.

In coordination with an outside consultant, the AOC will conduct the study in three phases:

Phase 1 (Aug.–Oct.)

Identify the types of data needed most to project the effects of the described changes on court administration and the quality of justice.

Phase 2 (Oct. 2001–Apr. 2002)

Identify the sources and best means of gathering data as determined in phase 1, and collect the data.

Phase 3 (Apr.–June 2002)

Analyze the data to project the likely effects of the potential changes, and develop recommendations.

The AOC is considering the development of a Web site at which judges and court staffs, attorneys, and court users could comment on issues and respond to survey questions related to the three-track procedural system.

- For more information on the study, contact Janet Grove, AOC's Office of the General Counsel, 415-865-7702; e-mail: janet.grove@jud.ca.gov. ■

“Mod” Fund Grants Awarded to Courts

In April, the Judicial Council Approved the allocation of nearly \$1.5 million in grant funding to the trial courts as part of the Judicial Administration Efficiency and Modernization (“Mod”) Fund grants for fiscal year 2000–2001.

The Mod Fund innovation grants support short-term, single-purpose local projects that take advantage of timely opportunities or address critical problems in the trial courts. Projects that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of trial court operations are eligible for funding.

The winning proposals were selected by a grant awards committee consisting of representatives from the trial courts, the Judicial Council, the Bench/Bar Coalition, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC). The committee considered such factors as whether the project:

- Improves access to courts for low- and moderate-income persons;

- Improves jury management;

- Enhances court-community outreach;

- Assists in developing self-help centers;

- Helps to implement the Trial Court Performance Standards; or

- Furthers one or more of the strategic goals promoted by the Judicial Council (access, fairness, and diversity; independence and accountability; modernization; quality of justice and service to the public; education; and technology).

Grantee courts must submit a progress report at the midpoint of the grant project as well as, within 30 days after the conclusion of the project, a report discussing its outcomes. A certification regarding the use and expenditure of grant funds must be made part of the final report.

- For more information on the Mod Fund innovation grants, contact Nzinga Nyagua, 415-865-7558; e-mail: nzinga.nyagua@jud.ca.gov. ■

CountyProfile

San Diego



The main courthouse, located in the city of San Diego, was dedicated in 1961.

Geographic area: 4,255 square miles, located in the southwestern corner of California

Population: According to the 2000 U.S. census, the population is 2,813,833, making San Diego the third largest county in the state. By 2020, the population is expected to grow to 3,917,001.

Demographics:

Age: 0–19 ≈ 31%; 20–39 ≈ 34%; 40–59 ≈ 21%; 60–79 ≈ 11%; 80+ ≈ 3%

Race/Ethnicity: White ≈ 59%; Hispanic ≈ 25%; Asian or Pacific Islander ≈ 9%; Black ≈ 6%; American Indian ≈ 1%

Number of court locations: 11

Number of authorized judges: 128

Number of staff: 1,600

Caseload: Filings for 1999–2000 totaled 697,647

Annual court operating budget: \$144 million as of January 2001

Presiding judge: Wayne L. Peterson

Executive officer: Stephen Thunberg

Of note: The county is home to Mt. Palomar, which serves as the site for the Hale telescope, the world's second largest telescope. Its lens has a range surpassing 1 billion light-years.

Sources: Superior Court of San Diego County; California State Department of Finance; U.S. Census Bureau; California Guidebook



Mod Fund Grants

Following are the counties that received fiscal year 2000–2001 Mod Fund innovation grants and their funded projects.

Amador Finance and accounting service analysis

Calaveras Risk analysis and contingency plan development; community access project

Contra Costa Family group conferences in probate court; training for mediators and attorneys representing children; pro per service center study

Glenn Process re-engineering project

Inyo Juvenile justice handbook and resource guide; jury room furnishings

Los Angeles Performance management and strategic plan implementation

Madera Telephone upgrade with voice-mail

Marin Classification and compensation study

Merced Windows 2000 technical training

Nevada Children's waiting room; replace-

ment of telephone system

Orange Courtroom staffing and dispatching system; small claims video

San Bernardino Telephone directory system

San Diego Enhancing court services through project management

San Joaquin Annual report to public; court interpreter training program

San Luis Obispo Prefiling mediation project; help line and information booth

San Mateo Court interpreter seminar

Santa Barbara DUI video

Santa Clara Mobile self-help center; translation of self-help center and Web site information

Santa Cruz Court information center

Siskiyou Evaluation development tool project; training and orientation manual

Solano Records management project; telephone system

Sonoma Plan for updating signs

Ventura Elders' waiting room

Courts Celebrate Law Day

Children and The Law

- The phrase “best interest of the child” has been part of American law since 1787 and has always guided courts in cases involving children.
- In matters related to parents who are divorcing or separating, the standard of “protecting the best interest of the child” is generally the primary consideration for the judges who decide the issues involving children.
- Children are more likely to be abused by family members than to be abused by strangers or others in the community.
- Until the creation of the juvenile court, children were tried and sentenced as adults. They were sent to the same prisons—and in certain cases to the same gallows—as adults.

Source: American Bar Association

President Dwight D. Eisenhower established Law Day by presidential proclamation in 1951. But it wasn't until 1961 that Congress declared May 1 “a special day of celebration by American people in appreciation of their liberties” and an occasion for “rededication to the ideals of equality and justice under laws.”

This year's Law Day theme was “Celebrate your freedom: Protecting the best interests of our children.” Law Day observations around the country focused on ways in which American law relates to children and how it can do a better job of protecting them. Several courts addressed this theme by advancing young people's understanding of the law

and the legal system.

Following are descriptions of how a few of California's courts approached Law Day 2001.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The Superior Court of Los Angeles County's Alhambra courthouse invited local students to participate in a mock trial. Judge Candace J. Beason presided over the trial with assistance from San Gabriel Valley Bar Association attorneys Jeffrey Yee and Michael Miller. Fifty-one students from All Souls Catholic School in Alhambra and 10 from Oak Avenue Intermediate School in Temple City participated in the event. The Law Day commemoration also included presentations by

the district attorney's office and the public defender's office, as well as a tour of the courthouse and its lock-up facility.

In the county's Pomona courthouse, more than 200 area students took part in Law Day ceremonies, which were attended by local assembly members, mayors, district attorneys, and sheriffs. Court officers examined and honored student essays and posters on the theme of Law Day. In addition, the students received a tour of the courthouse.

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

The Superior Court of San Bernardino County forged a partnership with the San Bernardino School District to recognize Law Day. More than 500 junior and senior high school students attended school assemblies focused on the role of the courts and the legal system.

At the assemblies, presenters took a critical look at the way in which the American justice system is portrayed on television and in movies. The speakers included Martie Parsley, Ph.D., Coordinator of Special Projects for the court; Robin Cochran, an attorney for the San Bernardino County Council; and Lee Cochran, a former investigator with the Inland Division of the California Highway Patrol.

According to Dr. Parsley, the Law Day project was motivating for the court, students, and teachers. Many of the teachers who attended the assemblies requested that the court-school

partnership last throughout the year, with more direct involvement by the students.

Next year, the court plans to extend its Law Day program beyond the schools and use it as a vehicle for community outreach. In addition, the court will launch two new Web sites in honor of Law Day. One site will present the history of Law Day and information on issues related to the law and young people. The second site will be an animated, interactive, and educational virtual courthouse.

YOLO COUNTY

“Of Sausages and Kings: Election Law and the Initiative Process in California” was the title of a panel discussion at the Law Day celebration held at King Hall Moot Court Room on the campus of the University of California at Davis. The celebration is an annual event sponsored by the Superior Court of Yolo County, the University of California at Davis School of Law, and the Yolo County Bar Association. This year's panel discussion incorporated politics, policy, and the philosophy of elections, especially as they apply to initiatives in California.

The panel included Larry Sokal, Assistant to the Speaker, California State Assembly; Kelly P. Kimball, President of NIC Global, initiative expert, and media commentator; Floyd Feeney, Professor, University of California at Davis School of Law; and Tony Bernhard, Clerk-Recorder, Yolo County. Superior Court of Yolo County Judge Michael W. Sweet moderated the panel. ■



On May 12, the Superior Court of Los Angeles County staged a “Girl Scout Law Day” at its Van Nuys West courthouse. Third- and sixth-grade girls from the San Fernando Valley participated in court-sponsored sessions on fingerprinting, conflict resolution, legal careers, and mock trials. Here, Superior Court of Los Angeles County Judge Debra Katz Weintraub addresses the attendees at Girl Scout Law Day. Photo: Courtesy of the Superior Court of Los Angeles County

Self-Help

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no attempt to interpret the law, predict results, or provide legal advice on individual cases.

The new online self-help center offers:

◆ More than 900 pages of tools, resources, and links for legal assistance in the areas needed most by self-represented litigants, including family law, domestic violence, child custody and support, traffic, small claims, juvenile law, guardianship, elder law, and landlord-tenant issues;

◆ Easy-to-understand descriptions of court procedures, including information on bringing a lawsuit, responding to a lawsuit, and alternative dispute resolution;

◆ Step-by-step guides for choosing and completing the court forms that are necessary for

various legal proceedings; and

◆ Links to legal services organizations and lawyer referral programs where litigants can obtain legal advice and additional assistance.

“The online self-help center is full of useful information, and

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Programs and Services for Self-Represented Litigants

The Judicial Council has made improved access to the courts one of its top priorities. The council is involved with the following programs and services for self-represented litigants.

FAMILY LAW FACILITATORS

Family law facilitators assist parties with completing forms, explain court procedures, prepare support calculations, and provide workshops and referrals to community agencies that assist parents and families. Effective January 1, 1997, Family Code section 10002 established an Office of the Family Law Facilitator in each of California's 58 counties. Statewide, facilitators now help more than 30,000 self-represented litigants each month.

FAMILY LAW INFORMATION CENTERS

The Judicial Council administers three pilot family law information centers in the Superior Courts of Los Angeles, Sutter, and Fresno Counties. Supervised by attorneys, the centers assist low-income self-represented litigants with forms and provide information and re-

sources concerning dissolution, separation, parentage, child and spousal support, property division, custody, and visitation.

EQUAL ACCESS FUND

The Judicial Council is working in partnership with the State Bar's Legal Services Trust Fund to establish self-help centers in California courts. So far, 15 programs are assisting 17 courts throughout the state in cases involving domestic violence, guardianship, family law, landlords and tenants, and general civil matters.

TASK FORCE ON SELF-REPRESENTED LITIGANTS

The Judicial Council recently established the Task Force on Self-Represented Litigants to develop a statewide action plan for serving self-represented litigants and to review plans for establishing additional programs and services submitted by local courts.

WEB SITE

In coordination with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), the Judicial Council

launched a comprehensive online self-help center. This new site, located at www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp, provides substantive and basic procedural information as well as extensive resource and referral listings throughout the state concerning family law, adoptions, traffic, small claims, and other areas of the law.

VIDEOS

Through the AOC, the Judicial Council offers several videotapes to help the estimated 94,500 self-represented litigants involved in custody mediation each year learn more about family court procedures. The videos address such topics as mediation, custody evaluation, preparing court forms for an uncontested divorce, requesting a domestic violence restraining order, and responding to a request for a domestic violence restraining order. The videos are available in English and Spanish and come with written guides.

● For more information on these programs and services, call the Center for Families, Children & the Courts, 415-865-7739.

Local Courts Recognize Jurors

The second full week in May of each year shall be proclaimed and celebrated as annual Juror Appreciation Week throughout the state, in honor of the thousands of citizens who support the jury system, thereby making the cherished right of trial by jury a reality.” (Assem. Conc. Res. No. 118, Stats. 1998.)

“Jurors are the foundation of our legal system,” says Chief Justice Ronald M. George. “The success of our jury system depends on the participation of all citizens who are called to serve. I thank all those Californians who have taken part in this important civic duty.”

For this year’s Juror Appreciation Week, courts recognized their jurors and the importance of jury duty in a variety of ways. What follows is just a sampling of events that took place around the state.

LOS ANGELES COUNTY

The superior court sponsored a courthouse competition in which currently serving jurors at 37 of the county’s court locations rated the week’s events. The highest-ranking courthouse (yet to be announced) will receive the 2001 Juror Appreciation Week trophy.

Other events in Los Angeles County in observance of Juror Appreciation Week included a portrayal of Abraham Lincoln in Alhambra, aerobics workouts in Beverly Hills, free commemorative court booklets in Compton, a noontime Peruvian music concert at the downtown courthouse, and a fashion show in the criminal courts building.

PLACER COUNTY

The superior court recognized its jurors with free coffee, cookies, doughnuts, and giveaways that included water bottles, pens, coffee cups, buttons, and balloons. In addition, the court publicized Juror Appreciation Week with street banners and newspaper articles.

SACRAMENTO COUNTY

To show its appreciation for jurors, the court offered them complimentary morning and afternoon refreshments and commemorative water bottles. It also showcased Juror Appreciation Week banners made by students in Kennedy High School’s creative advertising class.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

In celebration of Juror Appreci-

ation Week, the court sponsored a concert by Marine Band San Diego at the city’s Horton Plaza Square. In addition, it offered its jurors in the downtown courthouse free Krispy Kremes doughnuts, bagels, and orange juice.

SANTA CLARA COUNTY

The superior court provided jurors with complimentary coffee and pastries, “We Appreciate Our Jurors” pens, and “We Love Our Jurors” buttons. In addition, it distributed to all its currently serving jurors certificates of appreciation signed by Presiding Judge Richard C. Turrone.

SHASTA COUNTY

Superior court employees showed their appreciation by wearing “We Love Our Jurors” buttons and providing jurors with free bookmarks, pens, coffee, tea, orange juice, fruit, and muffins. The court also arranged for local restaurants to donate gift certificates for jurors.

VENTURA COUNTY

The Ventura County court treated its jurors to a free magic show as well as complimentary coffee, pastries, cookies, ribbons, and bookmarks. ■

Jury Service Update

❖ Most courts need to summon more jurors now than they did before the implementation of the one-day/one-trial jury system. But most courts also report that juror satisfaction has increased since the system’s inception.

❖ Since the implementation of the one-day/one-trial jury system, many courts have established more stringent procedures for demonstrating hardship.

❖ Nearly two-thirds of courts indicate that they use same-day telephone notification of jurors.

❖ The top three reasons for juror disqualification are non-U.S. citizenship, nonresidency in the court’s jurisdiction, and limited knowledge of English.

❖ The top three reasons for granting prospective jurors hardship excuses are financial circumstances, disability, and dependent-care responsibilities.

❖ On average, jurors travel less than 15 miles one way to court.

❖ Courts use a variety of approaches for dealing with jurors who fail to appear for service, the most popular being letters, additional notices, and orders to show cause.

❖ Most judges allow jurors to take written notes during trials.

❖ In only a small proportion of courts is it a uniform judicial practice to allow jurors to submit written questions during a trial.

❖ Giving jurors advice or suggestions on “how to deliberate” is a fairly uncommon judicial practice.

Source: California Jury Program: Fall 2000 Survey, Administrative Office of the Courts

Self-Help

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also has the ability to expand to include even more resources in the future,” says Nancy Kizziah, whose judicial assistant position with the Superior Court of Imperial County involves acting as a small claims advisor, a probate examiner, and a training officer. “I am anxious to be able to give this information to my small claims customers.”

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE

The site was developed and coordinated, starting in February 2000, by the AOC’s Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) and its Office of Communications, with major contributions from the Administrative Support Unit, the Information

Services Division, the Trial Court Programs Division, and the Office of the General Counsel.

As part of the content for the site, many existing Judicial Council forms were reformatted for the Web environment. However, a significant portion of the site’s resources were developed expressly for it, including a special forms and instructions section to assist users in selecting and filling out forms; a glossary of terms; and step-by-step guides for completing certain types of cases independently, including filing for divorce or a name change, getting a restraining order, changing a custody order, and more.

“This Web site is an extremely valuable project that will go a long way toward steering self-represented litigants in the right direction,” says Claudia Archer, Program Manager for the

family, juvenile, and probate divisions of the Superior Court of Solano County. “Especially helpful is the fact that the site lists specific forms that litigants need to complete—that’s information our divisions do not give out over the counter. We’ll definitely be referring lots of proper litigants to the Web site for filing information.”

Besides tapping the experts within its own ranks, the AOC sought input on the site from more than 400 outside legal practitioners. They included family law facilitators, judges, court administrators, and members of the California Commission on Access to Justice and the Judicial Council’s Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee and Access and Fairness Advisory Committee. And in June 2001, in anticipation of the public launch in July, the AOC announced the new site to the court community and invited its feedback.

OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

The AOC has begun reaching out to members of the public to inform them about the new self-help Web site. In July, the agency embarked on an extensive public awareness campaign aimed at court users, especially those most likely to be self-represented. The campaign also targets social service agencies and legal assistance providers, including libraries, domestic violence shelters, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and the Department of Consumer Affairs, to name a few. In addition, the AOC will post promotional materials in high-traffic public areas and send information to the media in the form of

news releases, fact sheets, and public service announcements.

“This site will be an invaluable tool for our staff, our patrons, and the public at large,” says Mary Hays, assistant director of the San Francisco Law Library. “It is one of the best possible uses of the Internet.”

The AOC welcomes comments, suggestions, and reports of technical problems; it will use such feedback to improve the self-help center. To comment on the site, visitors can click on the *Feedback* button at the bottom of the self-help home page. ■



Self-help centers like this one in the Superior Court of Los Angeles County assist self-represented litigants with forms and provide them with information and additional legal resources.

California’s Self-Represented Litigants

- ❑ Most of the 6 million annual traffic court filings in California involve self-represented litigants.
- ❑ All of the nearly 400,000 annual small claims filings in the state involve self-represented litigants.
- ❑ Of the estimated 94,500 child custody mediation cases handled by California courts each year, half or more involve at least one self-represented parent.
- ❑ Less than 16 percent of child support cases in California involve parents who both are represented by attorneys. In more than 63 percent of child support cases, neither parent has representation.
- ❑ Ninety-seven percent of proceedings processed through local-government child support agencies in the state involve at least one self-represented parent.

Source: Administrative Office of the Courts